1: Lowie E-5 (1926) 1939 NT20 Washo NT20

protégé exactly what to do. But this informant did not restrict doctoring to dreamers. According to him, the Man Up in the Air, called by the Washo "This Man-Up-Here" and identical with the being who made the Washo and other tribes come out of a basket (p. 333), made medicines for the Washo to use in treating different ailments. At one time he owned everything—thunder, lightning, and so forth. Doctors would dig up some of the roots created by this deity. "Sometimes I myself dig up roots and give something to God. I say, 'I am giving something. I need this one. Now I am paying you, make it good for me.' If I cut myself and begin to bleed I rub wild parsnip and water on the wound, then it gets better and stops bleeding. I have treated my sons with roots. I would treat a stranger for a fee, but have never done so."

The dream doctor's (tamo'mli) technique consisted largely in smoking, pondering, sucking (tepe'mu''suki) at the assumed place of affliction, and extracting the cause. He would spit out objects, the last one expectorated being the pathogenic agent. Putting it on his palm, he would look at it, as would his spectators. Sometimes it was a bug. The shaman put hot ashes on his hand, rubbed them on the bug, killed it, and threw it away. The patient would get better and possibly in a week feel as well as ever. In the old days a treatment always lasted four nights. Dave said that only old men doctored, but another informant said that some women also treated the sick.

A myth (p. 337) illustrates the essential procedure. Specifically, it suggests the importance of smoking. A messenger is sent to summon Coyote to a patient and asks the trickster, "Do you sometimes smoke for somebody?" Coyote, feigning modesty, replies, "Oh, once in a while I light tobacco for a smoke. That is why they call me a doctor." He brings a mink hide full of tobacco and a big pipe, sings twice on seeing his patient, shakes his globular rattle, and smokes twice. His mouth does not feel dry, so he prophesies the young woman's recovery. Her mother then offers him a buckskin, but he insists on pine nuts.

Characteristically, when the girl of the story dies the bereaved mother suspects the doctor of poisoning her and sends Porcupine and Skunk to kill him. Yet nothing in the report of his activities indicates that he had contemplated more than duping the mother into a payment of food.

Such correlation of shamanistic power with evil magic is prominent in Washo belief, even apart from medical treatment. About forty-five years ago (Dave, *loq.* 1926), a race was held in Carson. The half-brother of Dave's father-in-law was refused admittance to the race course. He was very angry and muttered Washo words of revenge. He made magic between his palms, spitting into his right palm and clenching his fist. Then, when the racers in the carts got to the last turn in the course, he opened his fist, thumb separated from the fingers. Two of the racers were upset and killed. The shaman gloated over this result. Subsequently the same man poisoned several Indians. One of the aggrieved relatives went to the shaman's house, talked with him in a friendly fashion, and finally pretended to take leave of him. When the doctor had covered himself with his blanket, the visitor took out a hidden hatchet and cracked the malefactor's skull with it.

[P.366, A]

MYTHOLOGY

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[114] Washo mythology has been presented in the form of interlinear texts by Dangberg (1927) and in Lowie's Ethnographic Notes (1939, pp. 333-351). There are two versions of the creation myth, one describing the creation of Paiute, Washo, and Diggers from the seeds of the cattail by the Creator Woman, and the second attributing the creation of Indians to the Creation Man, who formed the three groups from among his sons to keep them from quarreling. Lowie also reports the common theme of several previous inhabitations of the earth. The most important myth, or at least the one which is still commonly told and seems to be the favorite among the Washo, devotes itself to the adventures of Damalali (short-tailed weasel) and Pewetseli (long-tailed weasel). These heroes are responsible for many of the natural features of the region so references to this myth are rather frequent. The Coyote, in the form of a rather malevolent and stupid trickster, and the Wolf, a generally patriarchal and protective figure, appear in several myths, as do cannibalistic giants and a giant bird, the ag.

Figures which appear only incidentally in the myths as recounted are elaborated almost infinitely in what might best be termed folk fantasy.

WATER BABIES

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776 Most prominent of these figures are the Water Babies (Stewart 1941, p. 444, 2574). In the mythology, Water Baby figures as the creature responsible for the many lakes of the eastern Sierra. Killed and scalped by the rascally Damalali, Water Baby commands the waters of the area to rise until the weasel returns the scalp to avoid drowning. The waters left in mountain valleys as the flood receded formed the lakes.

776 The Water Baby is not confined to mythology. My informants were able to describe the appearance of a Water Baby in detail, to supply me with population figures, and to recount an almost endless series of incidents in which Water Babies were involved.

All informants agreed that the Water Baby is a creature about one and one-half feet tall, gray in color, with extremely long black hair which never touches the ground but which floats along behind the Water Babies when they walk. In general, these creatures look like small humans. However, they are boneless, cold to the touch, and damp.

Between two and three thousand Water Babies live in the Sierra, according to one informant. They inhabit lakes, streams, marshes, ponds, springs, and irrigation ditches. They speak a language of their own but are always able to speak Washo. With a single exception, every Washo of middle age and over to whom I talked claimed to have at least heard Water Babies calling from some body of water in the night. Several others claimed to have seen Water Baby footprints
[177] (one even reporting that the footprints he had seen were those of a female because the tracks were clearly those of high heeled shoes!). One informant steadfastly claimed to have seen a Water Baby, at least fleetingly, in 1956.

776 787 539 Water Babies lived in a big house made out of that black shining rock [obsidian]. But they didn't go there. The Water Baby said 'we got some girls that want to give you something,' and he took my uncle to a place and there was five girls there. They all sat around my uncle and sang him a song and told him that it was his song from now on. Then the Water Baby took my uncle back and then he said it was like waking up from a dream and there he was laying in the creek down under a bunch of cattails."[*]

776 539 6. "There was this white man up here fishing. He caught a Water Baby but he didn't know what it was. He thought it was some kind of fish and took it to San Francisco and they put it that place where they have a lotta fish [aquarium]. Captain Jim went all the way down there to tell the mayor that they had better let that Water Baby loose, but nobody would pay no attention to him. Well you know they had a big earthquake down there and the water came up around everything. When it was all over that tank where they had the Water Baby was empty."

THE GIANTS

● 773 776 Washo mythology features several creatures which may each have contributed to the wild men I will describe in this section. Both Lowie and Dangberg report myths in which a giant, Hangawuiwui, is the principal figure. Although the myths do not describe him, my informants generally picture him as a colossus who hops on a single leg from the top of one mountain to another. He has a single eye to match his single limb and a proclivity for gobbling up Indians. Several miles southwest of Gardnerville, in the hills overlooking Double Spring Flats, a cave is known by the Washo as Hangawuiwui aŋ?l (the place where Hangawuiwui lives). Present-day Indians tell a number of stories about this giant and display a certain uneasiness when they are near places he is supposed to haunt.

Another kind of giant appears in a myth reported by Lowie. These beings appear to be considerably more human than Hangawuiwui. Traditionally they camped south of Pyramid Lake and terrorized the Paiutes. However, when one of their number attempted to take fish from a Washo the tribe rallied and routed the giants in a battle near Walker Lake. The giants did not have bows and arrows. They fortified themselves behind rock walls and threw stones.

According to my informant on the subject, the mountains are still the home of a tribe of "wild men." These people have managed to hide the location of their camps so that no one knows where they live. My informant felt that they were in fact some kind of Indian. Despite the mythological ability of the Washo to defeat the giants, modern stories about them suggest they have a great deal of supernatural power in addition to their physical prowess.

539 The following stories were told to me as contemporary or relatively recent occurrences:

1. "There is these wild fellas up in the mountains. I guess you call them giants. One time there was an old man who had set up a blind to hunt chip-

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[*] This story very closely parallels one recorded by James Hatch among the Yokuts. Kroeber Anthropological Society Papers, No. 19, Fall, 1958.

[P. 368, A]

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munks, like I told you yesterday. He was up in the pine-nut hills and he had killed four chipmunks. One of these fellas come along and he snatched up a chipmunk and he ate it. Then he snatched another and ate it. He tried to grab another but the old man wrestled with him and stopped him from getting the chipmunk and then he got away. He tussled with that wild man and got away. But a long time after when he was real old and went around with a long stick [staff], he went out walking and he didn't come back. They went out looking for him and found his tracks leading up the foot of Job's Peak and they ended there. His stick was stuck in the ground and at the end of his tracks it looked like something had snatched him up."

When I asked if the wild men had gotten him my informant said he thought so. The theme of a wild man's attempting to take part of a catch from a Washo recalls the myth as reported by Lowie, although in the version he recorded the incident occurred between Wadsworth and Sparks and the final battle took place at Walker Lake, whereas my informant changed the locale to the Carson Valley area.

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2. "My old grandfather had this happen to him. He was hunting up by the Lake [Tahoe]. In them days hunters just carried little thin rabbit skin blankets. They covered up their front and put their back to the fire. My old grandfather was just laying there when he noticed the fire going down (maybe that wild man did something to the fire). Pretty soon he saw a big shadow. He was pretty scared and just laid there. Pretty soon he felt a hand feeling his feet and in between his toes and up his leg and all around his hole [anus]. Pretty soon it reached his face and tried to put his finger in my grandfather's mouth. My grandfather bit that finger real hard and the wild man yelled and ran away."

I asked if the wild men still existed and my informant replied: "Sure. They are up there in the mountains. They are pretty smart and you can't see them. But us Washo can hear them talking. We can understand their language. I have thought a lot about it and they should have called some Washo over to Oroville when they caught that fella over there. I read about it in the newspaper when I was younger. I know they had a lot of them California Indians come up there but they couldn't understand him. I'll bet a Washo could have understood him." I asked if he thought it had been a wild man and he nodded in affirmation.

The "wild man" of course was the now-famous Ishi, the last of the Southern Yana who wandered half starved into a slaughterhouse in Oroville in 1911.

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THE COYOTE AND OTHER FIGURES

Washo myths contain a number of tales about a bumbling, not very bright, generally malevolent Coyote, who as a companion of Wolf seems to devote a great deal of time to eating Indians and to sexual misadventures.

● 773 Modern Washo seem less willing than their forebears to weave Coyote into tales but are no less conscious of his malevolent presence. Peyotists often see visions or dream of Coyote (d'Azevedo and Merriam 1957), and quick asides about Coyote's influence are apt to come up in conversation either as tentative jokes or in seriousness. One tale of a modern occurrence involving Coyote did come my way through the kindness of Warren d'Azevedo. His informant was the brother-in-law of my own informant and, like his kinsman, a semimystic, very conscious of his Indianness and credited by other Washo with powers beyond those of an ordinary man in hunting.

> "I was staying in this shack with the guy who owned it. One night he didn't come home but I kept hearing something walking around that shack. The next morning when that guy came home he was all tired out and there was Coyote tracks all around that shack. I got my gun and told that guy to stay away from me" (d'Azevedo).

773 The Aŋ, a huge man-eating bird described in Lowie's myth number 13, is no longer alive, but according to several informants the creature's bones or at least the island on which it nested can be seen by people flying over the lake because they are only a bit below the surface. Washo insist that white airplane pilots see the shape of the island daily but keep silent because they don't want to confirm an Indian story. One day on a trip around Lake Tahoe my Indian companion, a sometime leader among the Washo asked: "If we get that money from our claim do you think one of them archeologist fellas could go down under the water and find that there aŋ bird's skeleton?"

773 178 The foregoing paragraphs illustrate the tenacity with which Washo mythology has maintained itself among these people. The entirety of many of the myths is no longer part of the repertoire of every adult Washo, but variations, on-the-spot reconstructions, and the introduction of mythological themes into contemporary stories of a secular nature are definitely part of the oral literature of the Washo.

It is interesting to note that some aspects of Washo mythology appear to have more viability than others. Thus the Water Baby remains an important and vital aspect of modern Washo life, as does the Coyote. The twin weasels have lost much of their appeal, as has the giant Hangawuiwui. The giants of the mountains are acknowledged to be alive today but are seldom referred to, whereas Coyote and Water Baby are almost always mentioned and spoken of as living entities even by the most progressive Washo.

771 Except for the making of offerings to nature, which may be defined as purely religious, other religious or ritual activities dealing with what we would call the supernatural are so integrated with other aspects of Washo life as to be almost inseparable. Thus in describing the religious activities of the Washo I will proceed through various phases of their life, pointing out the ritual actions which are part of Washo behavior in specific situations.

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771 the Washo, it seems clear that the animal is held in special awe and esteem by modern Indians.

FISHING
(253a-296)

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789 Fishing appears to be far less subject to ritualization among the Washo than was hunting. Here again there may be a correspondence between the amount of ritual and the degree of certainty involved in obtaining the desired food. The Washo area is rated by Rostlund as being one of the higher fish-producing areas in North America. Certainly the many lakes, streams, and rivers were the source of great amounts of fish every year. Indians who could at most be described as only middle-aged, recount the tremendous numbers of fish which swept up the streams from Lake Tahoe during the spawning season. While the numbers may have varied from year to year, the large number of fish plus the intensive fishing methods employed by the Washo almost guarantee a large catch.

However, d'Azevedo reports that Northern Washo [787] describe some degree of ritualism connected with fishing (d'Azevedo personal communication). Dreamers are [535] said to have predicted the day of the spawning run. Dances were held and prayers said, suggesting a rather [782] attenuated first-fish ceremony for some of the Washo (2618). Other Washo report "big times," which included dancing and prayer, during the spring gathering on the lake. However, in the actual catching of fish there was much less ritual.

Some fishermen carried a fishing medicine com- [825] posed of dried larvae of the Ephydra hians (Say), called [439] kutsavi by the Paiute (Heizer 1950) and matsi babaša by the Washo. These larvae were obtained from the [262] Mono Lake Paiute in trade or as gifts. They were considered good food and are still eaten by some Washo. However, in addition they were credited with having great powers to lure fish and were rubbed on harpoons, hooks, and lines. Perhaps this material was considered a fish medicine because these larvae are said to be generated from the scales of a giant fish. This leviathan is reported to have traveled through all the lakes [773] in the Sierran area looking for a lake large enough in which to live. At Mono Lake it scraped some scales into the water before it left to find a permanent home in Lake Tahoe (Steward 1936). Whether the Washo share this story with the Owens Valley Paiute, I do not know, but Mono Lake, because of its saline water and its lack of any fish life, is thought of with some fear and awe. Today I get the impression that some Washo still keep a bit of this material with their fishing gear, although they are apt to rationalize it as a lure rather than real medicine. It should be remembered that hook-and-line or spear fishing accounted for a much smaller percentage of the total annual take than did trapping, damming, netting, or other communal methods which entailed no ritual.

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MISCELLANEOUS CONCEPTS ABOUT HUNTING AND FISHING

A number of ritual activities cluster around hunting and fishing. Perhaps the most important is the requirement that women, particularly menstruating women, avoid the hunting and fishing equipment. If a woman touched such gear the owner would bathe it and pray

8: Merriam& d'Azevedo E-4, 5 (1954-1955) 1957
NT20 Washo NT20

creation, and also gives some indication of the process of variation:

> When I was a child in Carson Valley I used to go out in the fields at night during a thunder storm to listen. Lightning and thunder had a special fascination for me, and I still dream about it. I remember how the sound of thunder seemed to strike against Job's Peak and then glance off and go rolling northward like the sounds which had followed and swallowed up "the old lady and the old man" (mythological creatures in the Washo creation tale). While the thunder was rolling away I could hear him singing a song; his voice was that sound thunder makes when it echoes among the mountains. I can remember that song, and I can sing it. I have sung it ever since I was a child. It is my song. The words went *li wa . . . li wa na*. That *li* sound was a kind of white man's language sound, kind of hard and rolling along . . . *li wan*.

Later, when the informant began to attend Peyote meetings, he started by singing this song, but in time he changed the "words" a bit to sound like *han a wan*. He did this to make it sound more like "Peyote song words." He was not sure that the original sounds were appropriate because they were filled with his earlier fears as well as his feeling that thunder and lightning were his "power." Peyote forces one to put these earlier powers aside and trust in Peyote. As time went on, he began to change the song slightly to include parts of other songs that struck him as similar to his. He heard one song from a member in Idaho which fitted into his own song. "But it is really my own song and pretty much the way I used to sing it when I was a kid; the way it moves and the words still remind me of the way thunder sounds when it echoes and bounces along the valley."

Variation, effect of recorder, and rivalry

It is difficult to ascertain many clear-cut patterns with respect to allowable variation in Washo Peyote songs. The range varies from a frank admission of improvisation during the course of the song, to saying about a "main" song that "It can't be changed in any way or it is wrong. You learn it that way and you keep it that way." It appears that, ideally at least, "main" songs are never changed; apparently other songs may be varied to the point of becoming "new." Under normal circumstances, the singer seems to try to keep the original version fairly well in mind—"I try to sing it the same way," or "If you can, you keep the song like you heard it"—but on the other hand, "I can't quite get it just the same," and "it is all right to change it some time." There is also a clear recognition of changing songs, expressed in such statements as:

> I made lots of changes, but I don't know exactly what they are now. I put some of my own sounds in and changed the tune a little. You can do that if you feel like it.

> I tried to keep the old words as much as possible, but I couldn't understand them anyway, so little by little I stuck in some sounds from my own language that seemed good.

At the same time, "it is important to keep the rhythm as much the same as you can; that's a special part of the song."

In the fifth cycle the singer sang five songs; when questioned he averred that "it doesn't make any difference outside the meetings," but he was more

that the shift has been gradual, with each adjustment a relatively minor one when contrasted to the stage immediately preceding it.

On the other hand, the adjustments needed to adopt animal husbandry as a basis or even important adjunct to the Washo economy would have required at one time or another a major shift in orientation, the abandonment of certain aboriginal practices, and the adoption of many new skills and values. This major shift the Washo did not make, continuing instead their gradual adjustment to changing conditions until they became inextricably involved in the socio-economic system of the area, and no longer in a position to undertake any large scale experiments in husbandry.

In questioning informants about domestic animals and the earlier relationships between domestic animals and the Washo, one trend becomes increasingly clear. The Washo are for the most part uncomfortable when involved in such a conversation. Description of the details of their behavior in this regard must perhaps await psychological testing, but it is clear that for the most part this is an experience they find uninteresting and unpleasant.

The explanation of this attitude may well lie in that area of Washo culture which appears to have survived most completely. The Washo world view and related attitudes about the supernatural and the nature of the world are clearly aboriginal and have been little affected by white contact (Downs, 1961b). An integral part of these aspects of Washo culture is a view of the nature of the animals man encounters in this world.

The Washo view of the animal kingdom is similar to that of many other Indian tribes in the West. Animals are the product of acts of creation essentially similar to that which produced man. At one time the prototypes of the animals lived as part of the human social system, conversing and interacting with mankind. As essentially the same class of being as man, animals are subject to many of the same laws as man, and are the possessors of power. Thus, to be a successful hunter one must have more power than the animals he hunts and at the same time he must propitiate them so that they will allow themselves to be killed for mankind's benefit. Thus the Washo view animals as a combination of fellow, powerful magician, and willing sacrifice. As such, animals must be treated with respect and viewed with awe.

Much of this attitude is summed up in the Washo usage of the word <u>musĕge</u>, which in its simplest translation means wild beast or dangerous beast. However, further probing of the many connotations of the word reveals that this is applied to any hunted animal, large or small, which eludes or outwits the hunter. Thus a bear is inherently musĕge, but a deer, or even a squirrel, is musĕge only if he manages to show his superiority to